X

For piano and electroacoustic sounds (2010)

for Xenia Pestova

By John Young

X expresses intersections between the piano and electroacoustically transformed sounds. The work is based around a constellation of piano chords whose spectral content is taken apart, transformed and extended into a sequence of overlapping forms with which the piano blends and interacts. A basic underlying idea is to focus on the rich resonance of individual notes or chords as archetypal sound events (one might think of this as the emulation of a bell, for example) which are then elaborated through electroacoustic transformation in conjunction with the textural and harmonic shading of the piano.

The work was composed for and inspired by the playing of Xenia Pestova.

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Performance and sound projection:

The stereo electroacoustic sounds are a series of 70 discrete sound files (48kHz/24bit) triggered in a Max/MSP patch controlled by the pianist using a MIDI pedal. A co-performer riding audio levels and following the Max/MSP patch is essential.

Performance requirements:
1. Grand piano (sostenuto pedal essential), tuned to A440.

2. 6-8 loudspeakers, as follows:
Stereo sound reproduction, ideally utilising six loudpseakers for reproduction of the electroacoustic sounds:
(1) One main pair onstage, either side of the piano, full frequency range with subwoofers.
(2) A second wide pair, typically near the front corners of the space.
(3) A third pair placed behind the piano, high enough to project over it.
(4) The piano should be amplified in stereo, ideally via a further pair of full range loudspeakers placed either side of the instrument and not forward of it. If this is not possible, the amplified piano sound may be projected through the main pair (1).

If only one main pair of loudspeakers is available, additional onstage monitoring should be used to assist the pianist. Depending on the scale of the performance space the extra onstage monitoring, close to the piano, may be necessary even when loudspeaker pairs 1-3 are available.

3. Mixer with stereo mic. preamps, and up to 8 group and 2 aux outputs for discrete control of loudspeaker pairs.

4. Computer with Max/MSP 5 or above (or runtime) and high quality audio interface for playback of electroacoustic sounds. The computer should be positioned with the mixer and balance should be attended to by an assistant during the performance, who should also follow the cues triggered by the pianist to ensure that they are in the correct sequence.

5. Performer-controlled footswitch/MIDI conversion (eg. footswitch with MIDI solutions footswitch controller), with MIDI cable routed to interface/computer. The Max/MSP patch may be adapted to accommodate different methods of triggering the sounds, but should always be triggered by the pianist.

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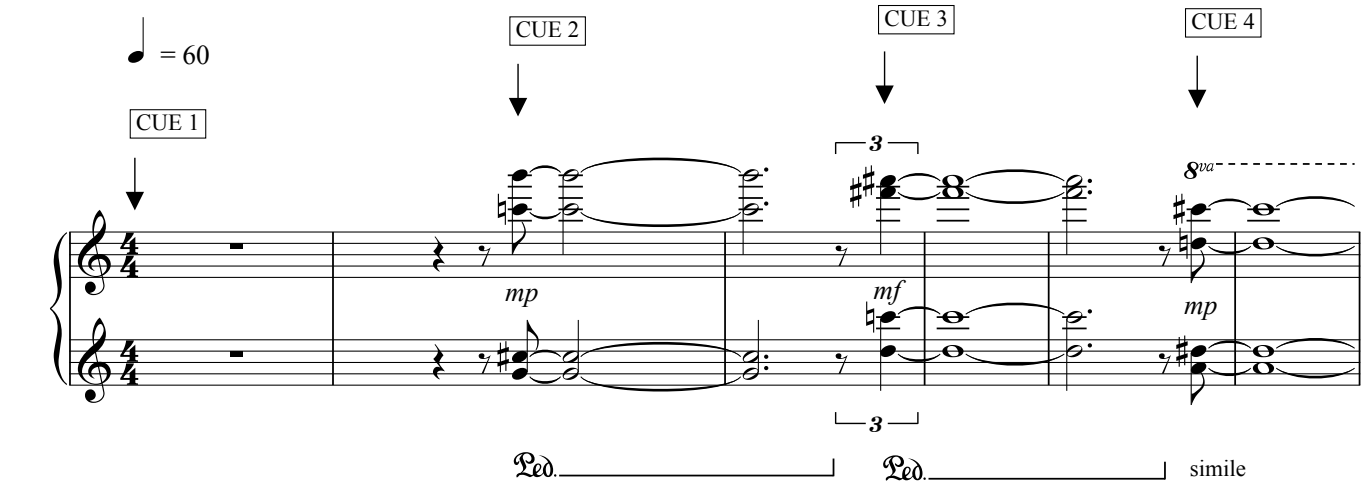
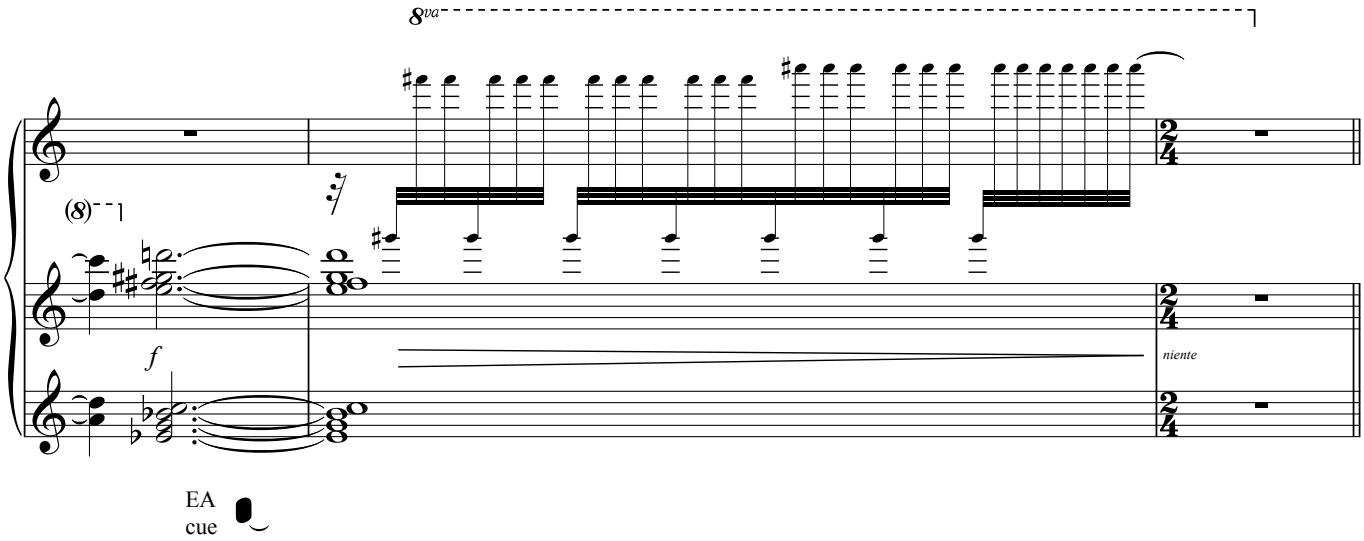
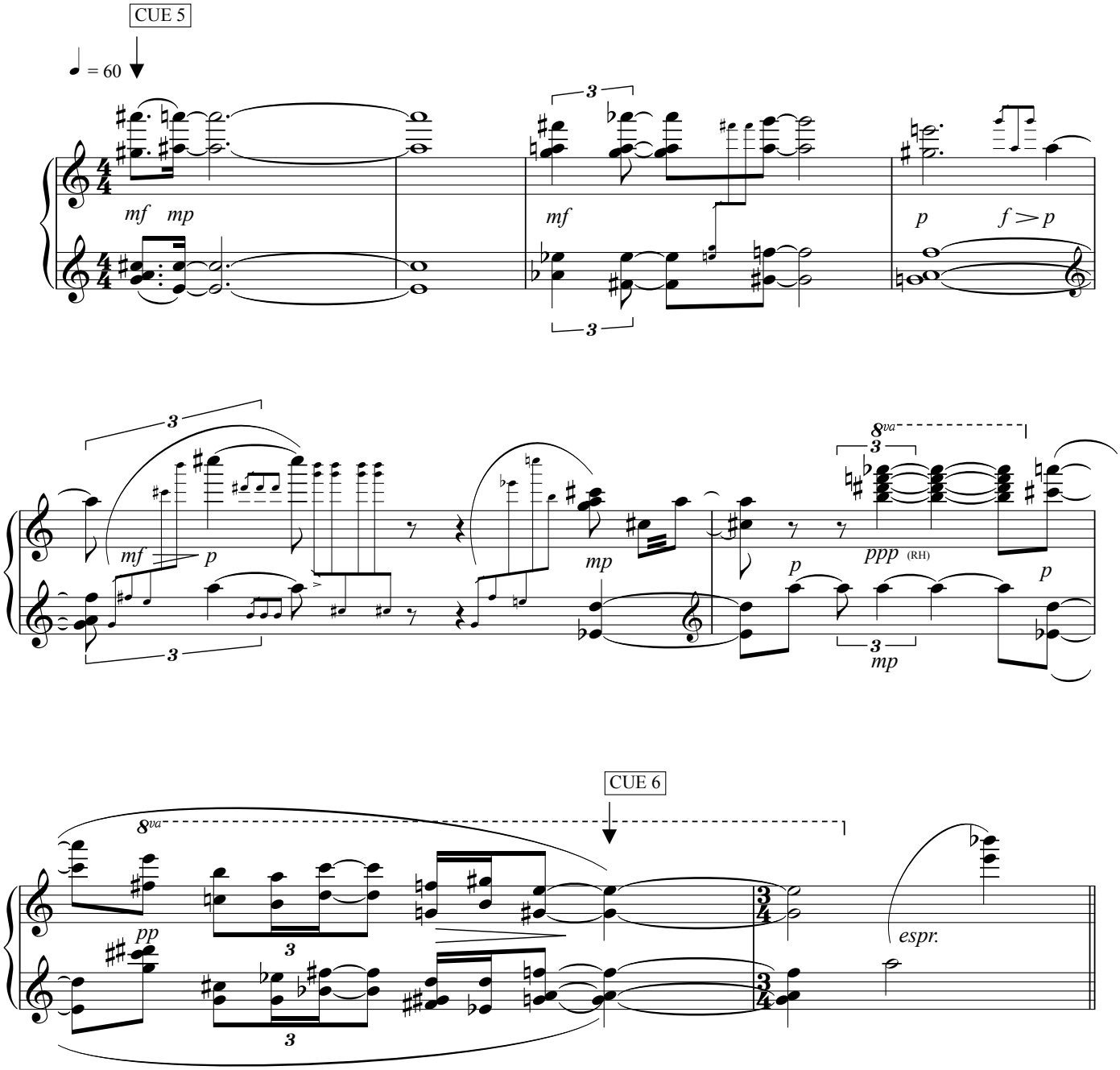
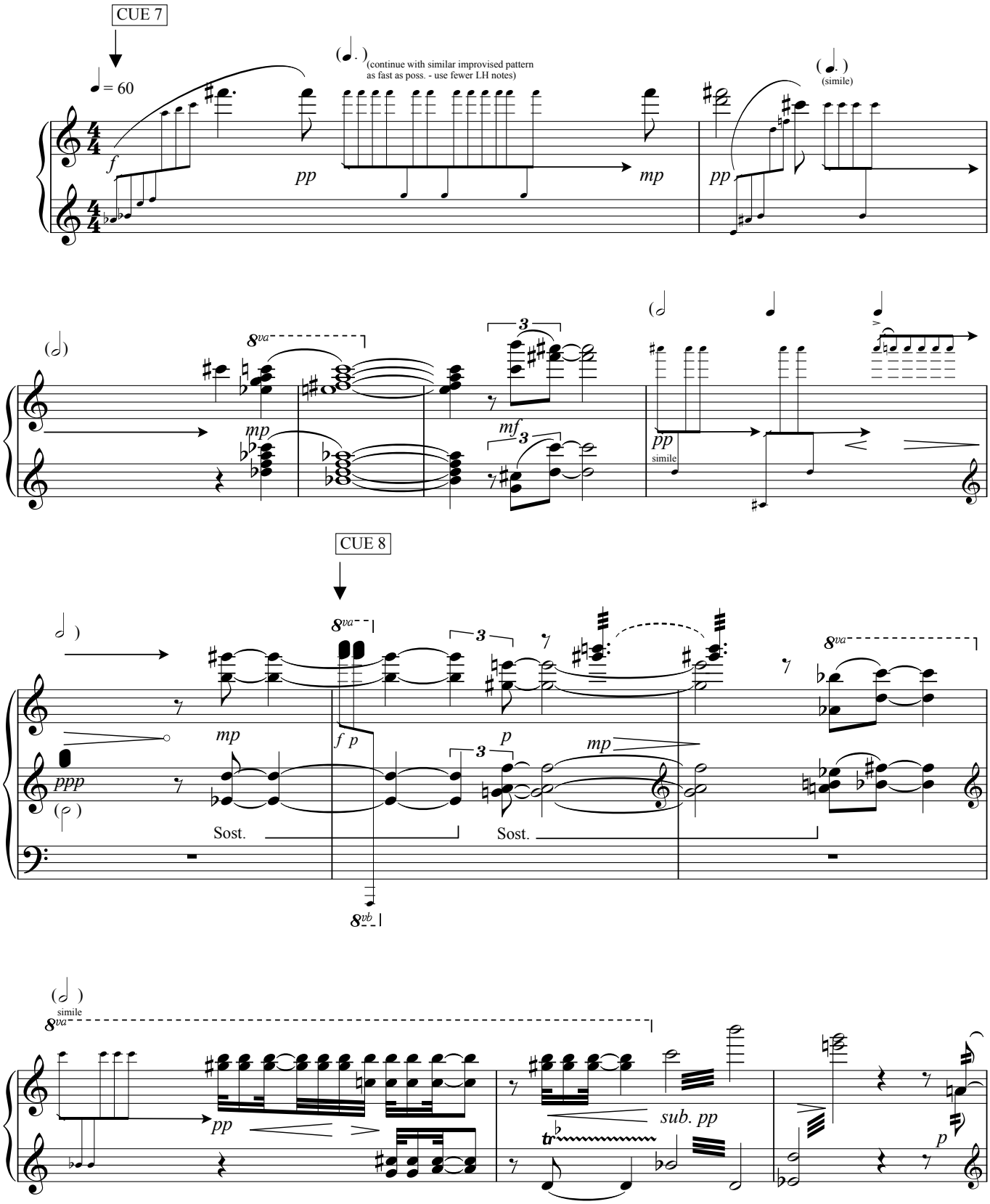
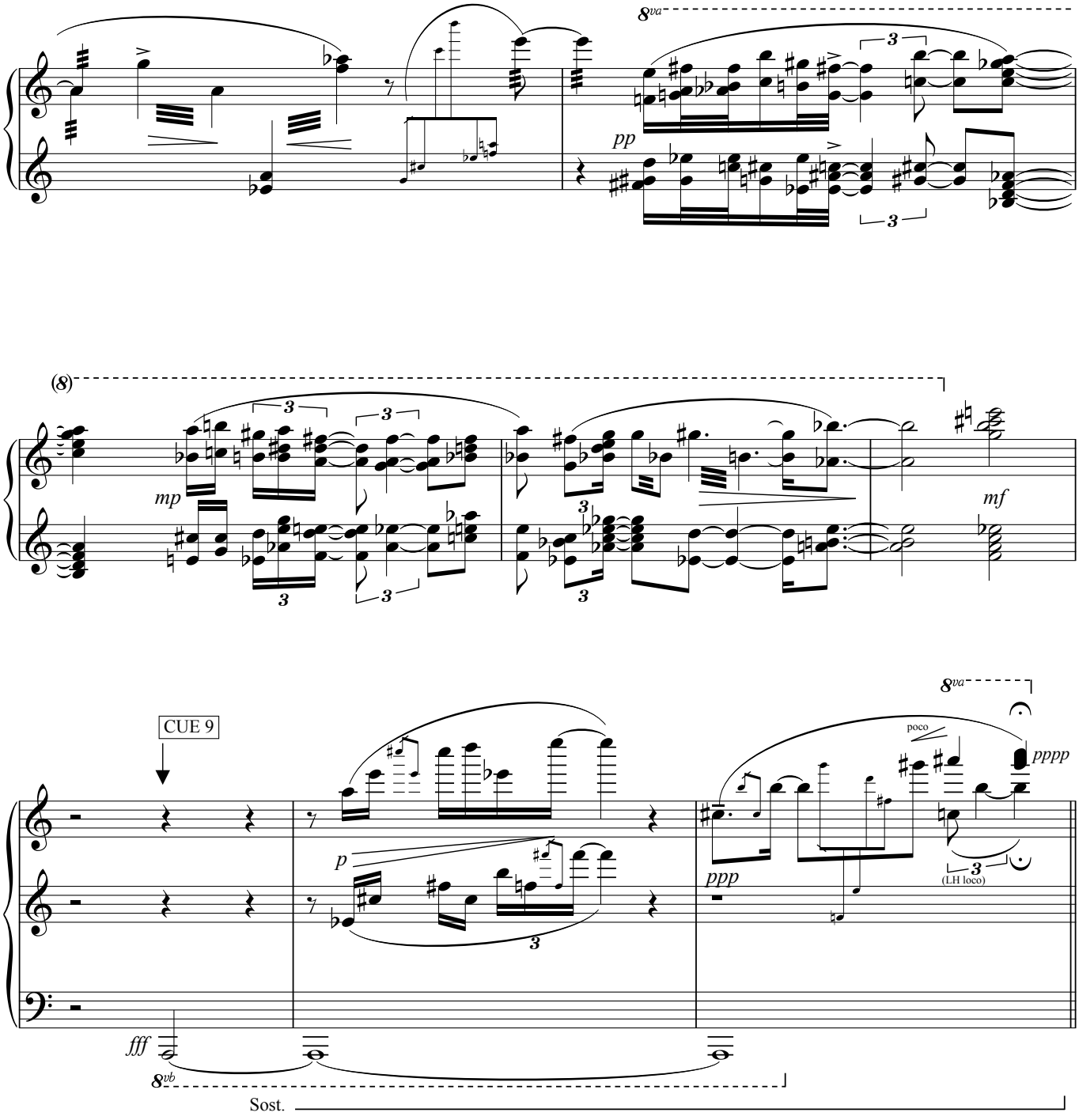
for Xenia

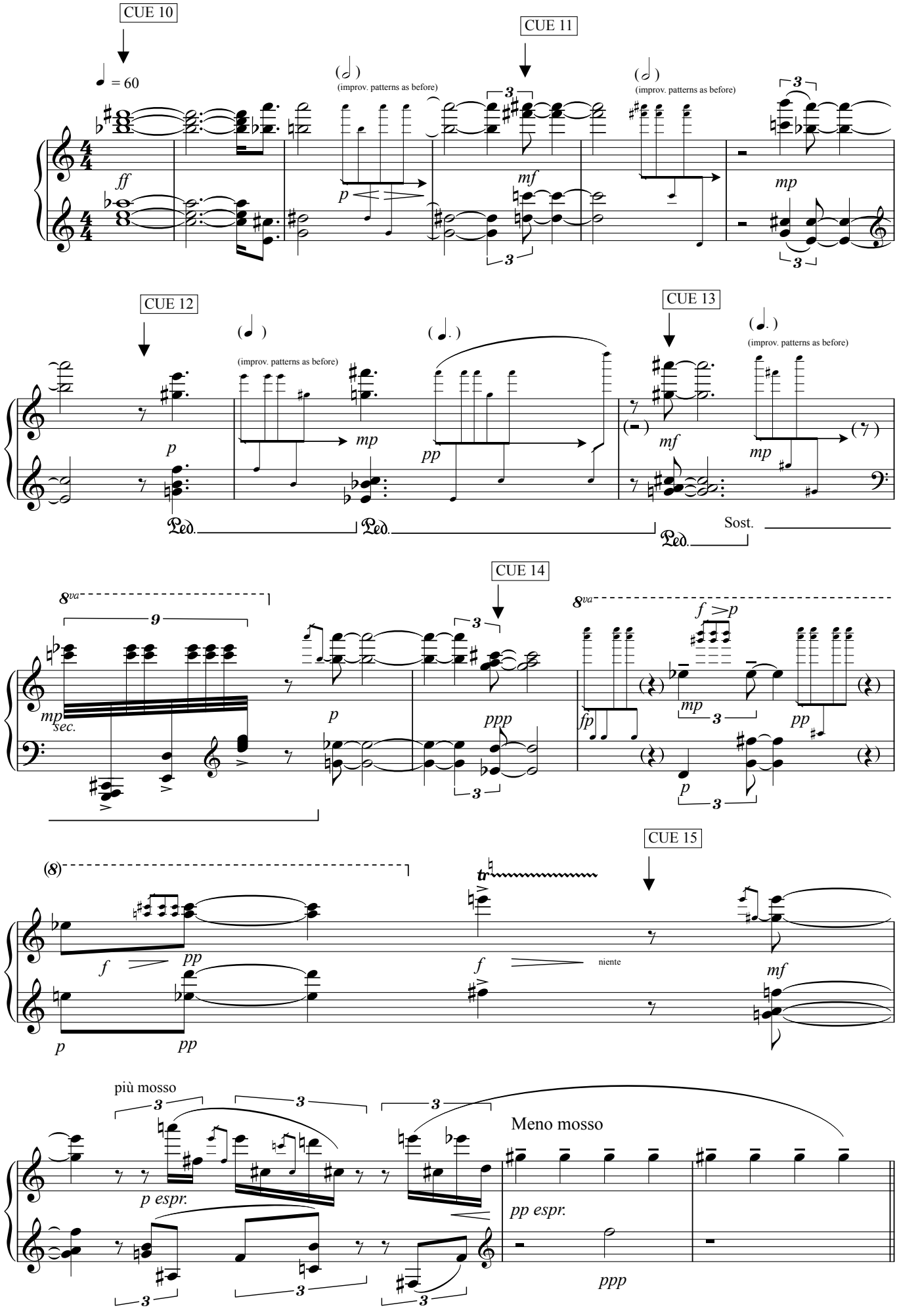


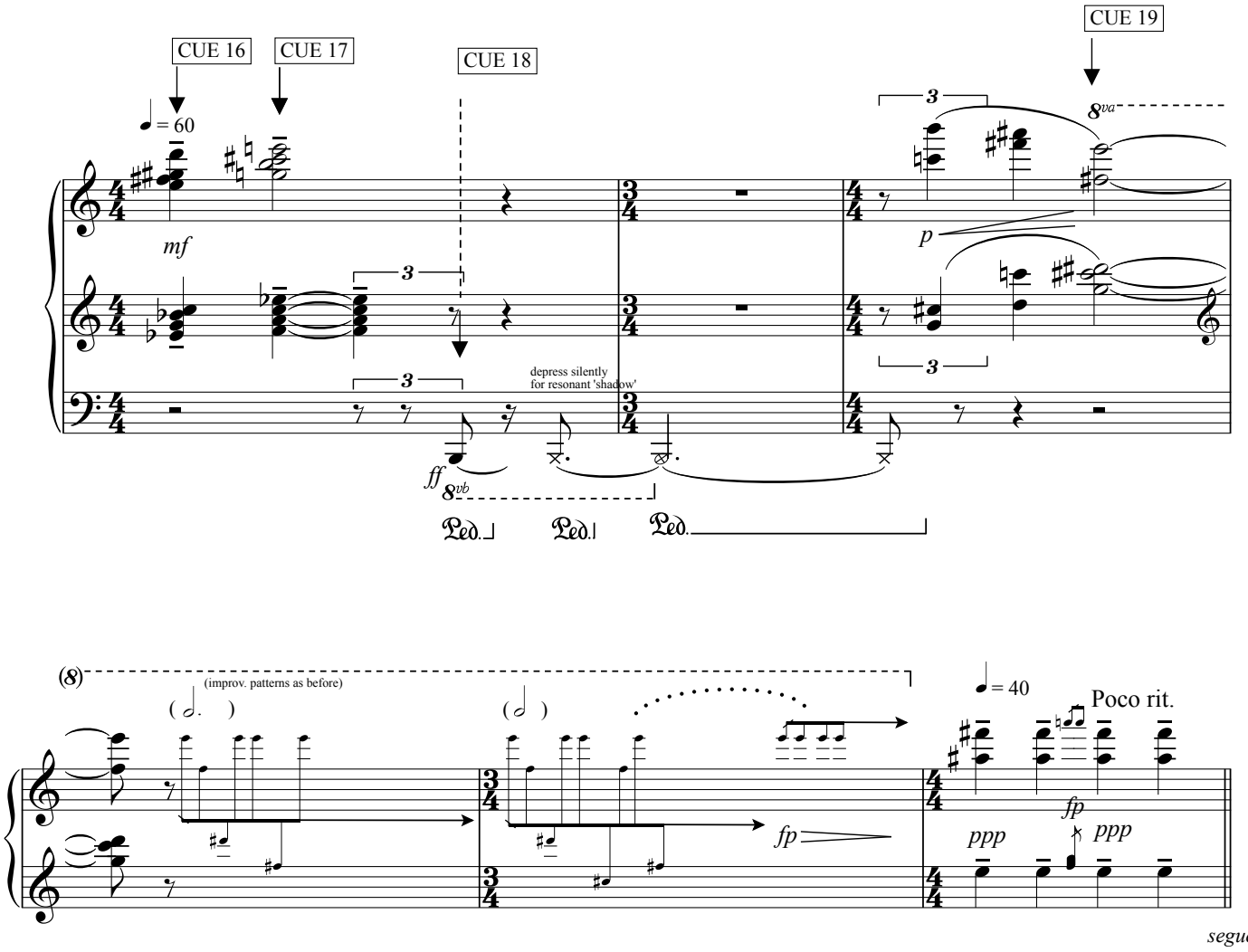


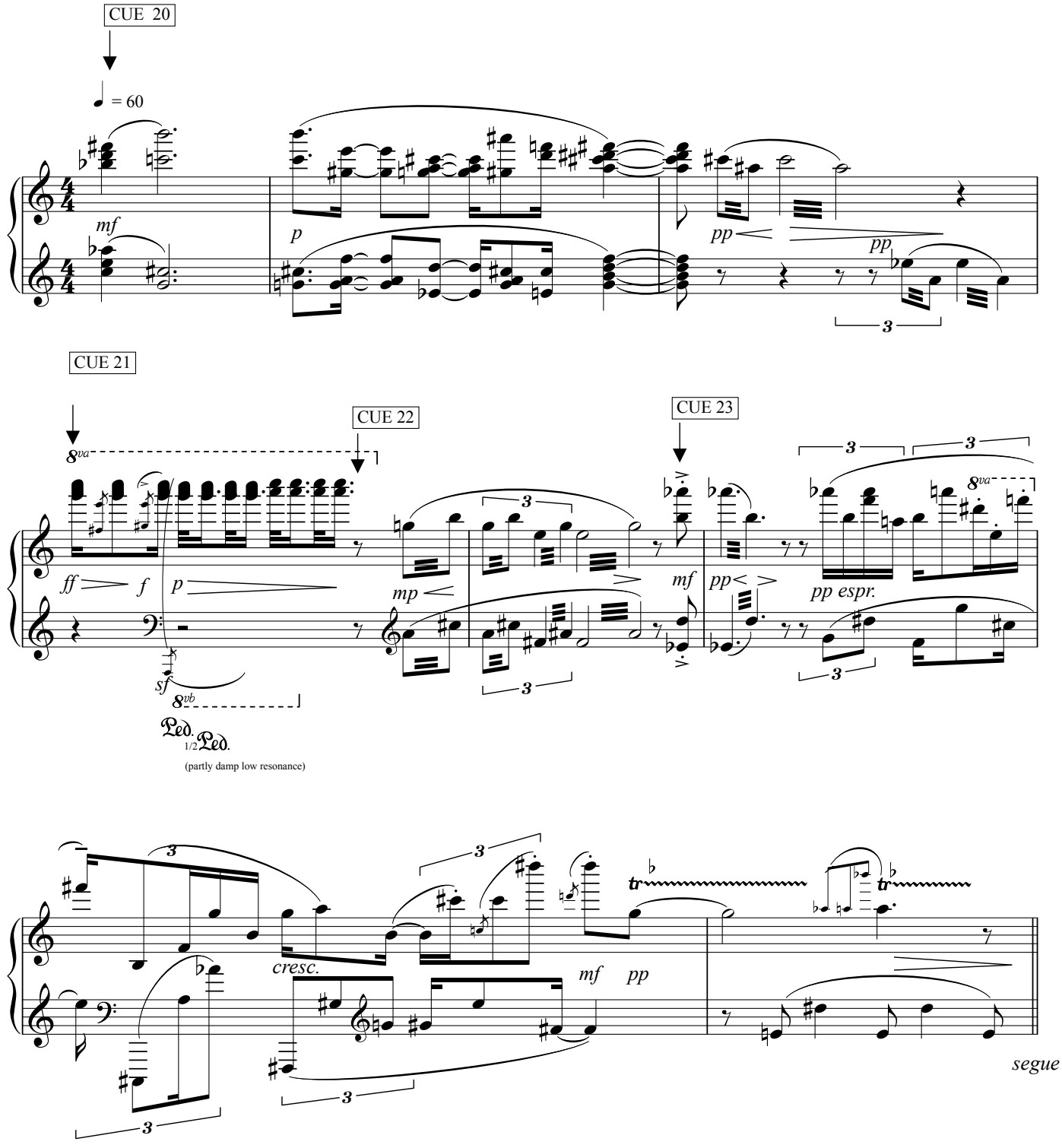

CUE 5
♩ = 60
mf mp
mf
p f > p
mf p
mp
p
ppp (RH)
p
mp
CUE 6
pp
espr.

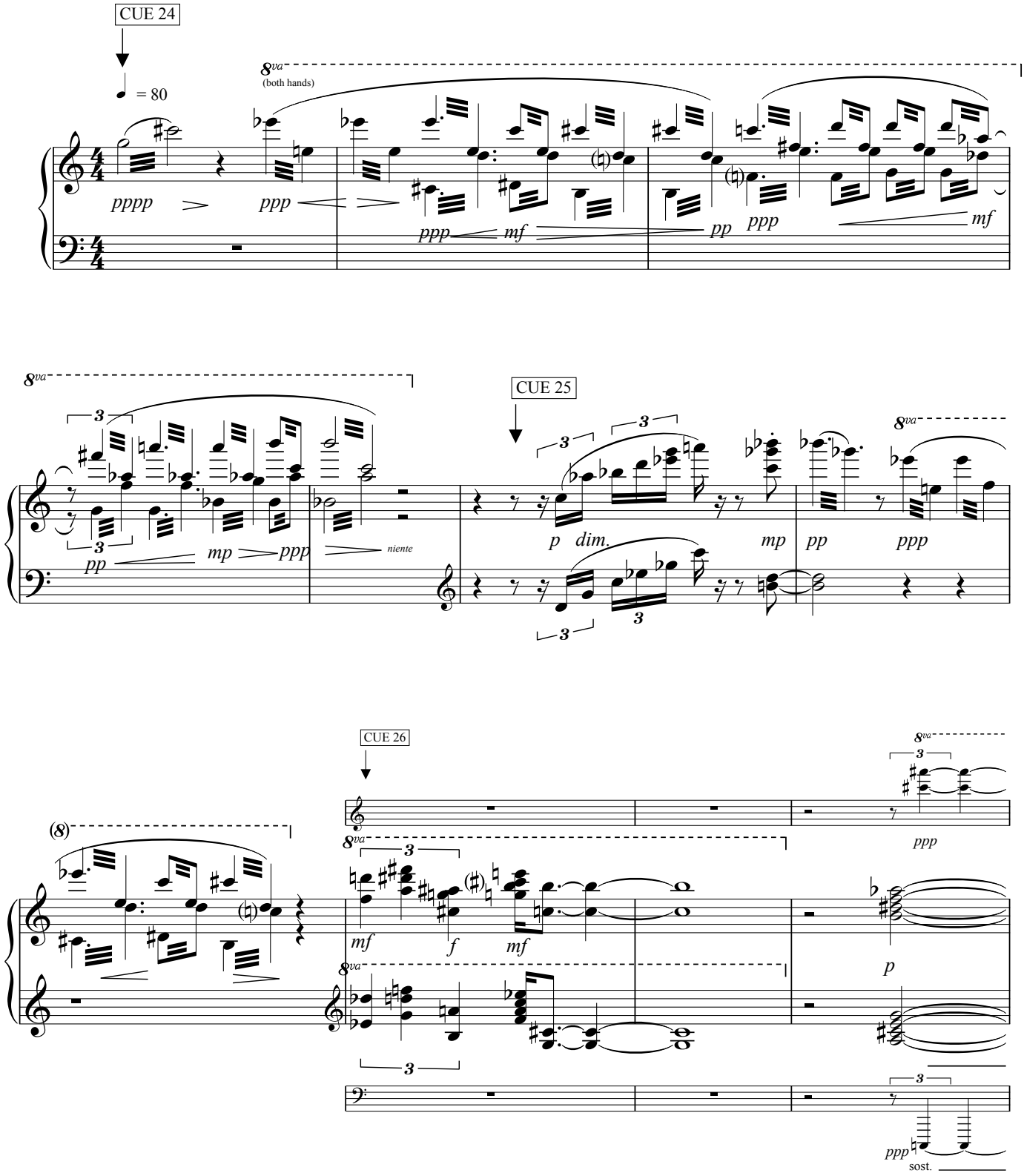

CUE 7
♩ = 60
(continue with similar improvised pattern as fast as poss. - use fewer LH notes)
(simile)
CUE 8
Sost.
Sost.
simile
sub. pp

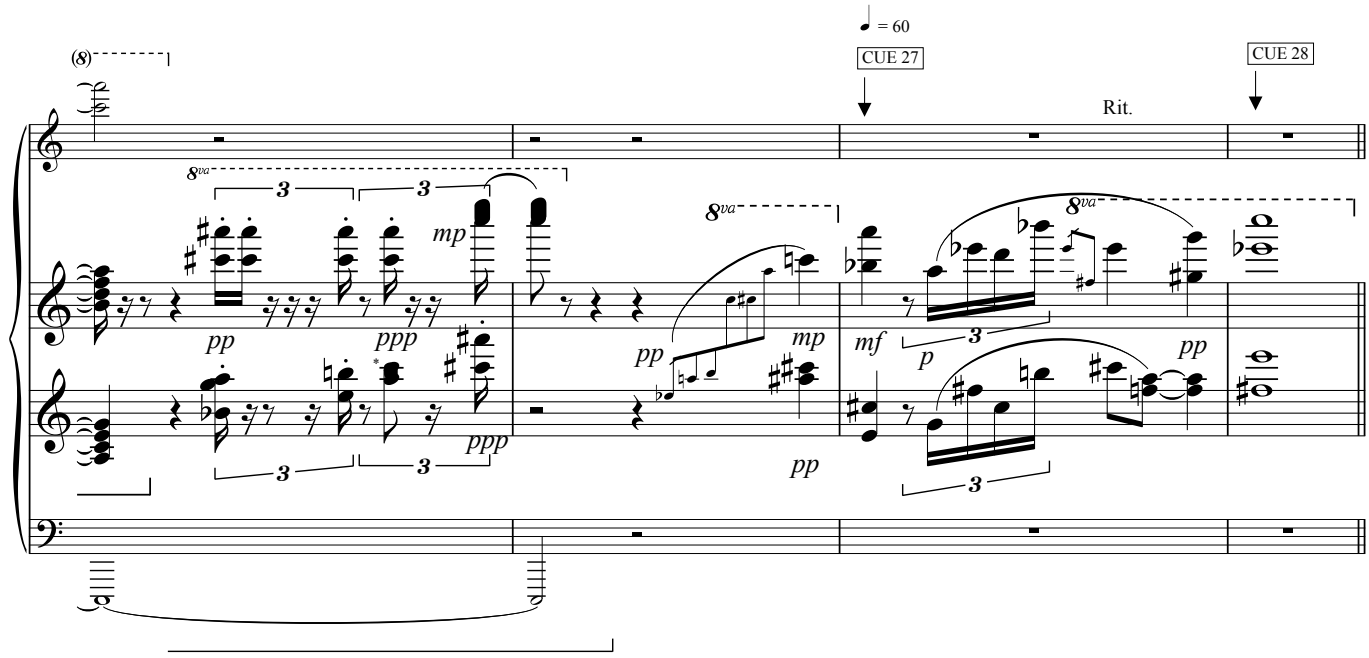

8va
pp
(8)
mp
mf
CUE 9
p
poco
pppp
ppp
(LH loco)
fff
8vb
Sost.


CUE 10
CUE 11
CUE 12
CUE 13
CUE 14
CUE 15
♩ = 60
(improv. patterns as before)
(improv. patterns as before)
(improv. patterns as before)
(improv. patterns as before)
Sost.
più mosso
Meno mosso
p espr.
pp espr.

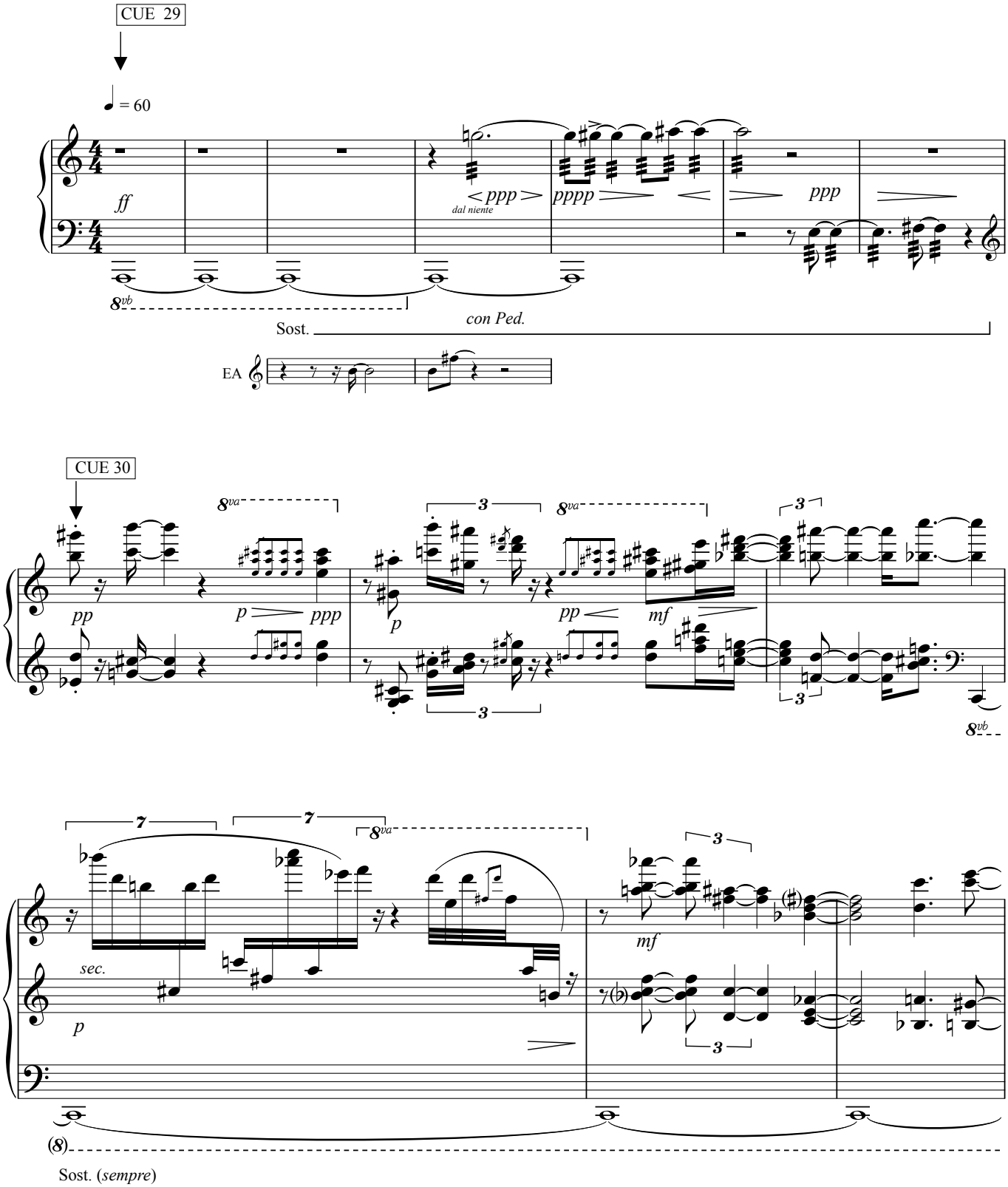

CUE 16
CUE 17
CUE 18
CUE 19
♩ = 60
mf
3
depress silently
for resonant 'shadow'
ff
8vb
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
8va
p
(8)
(improv. patterns as before)
fp
♩ = 40
Poco rit.
fp
ppp
ppp
segue

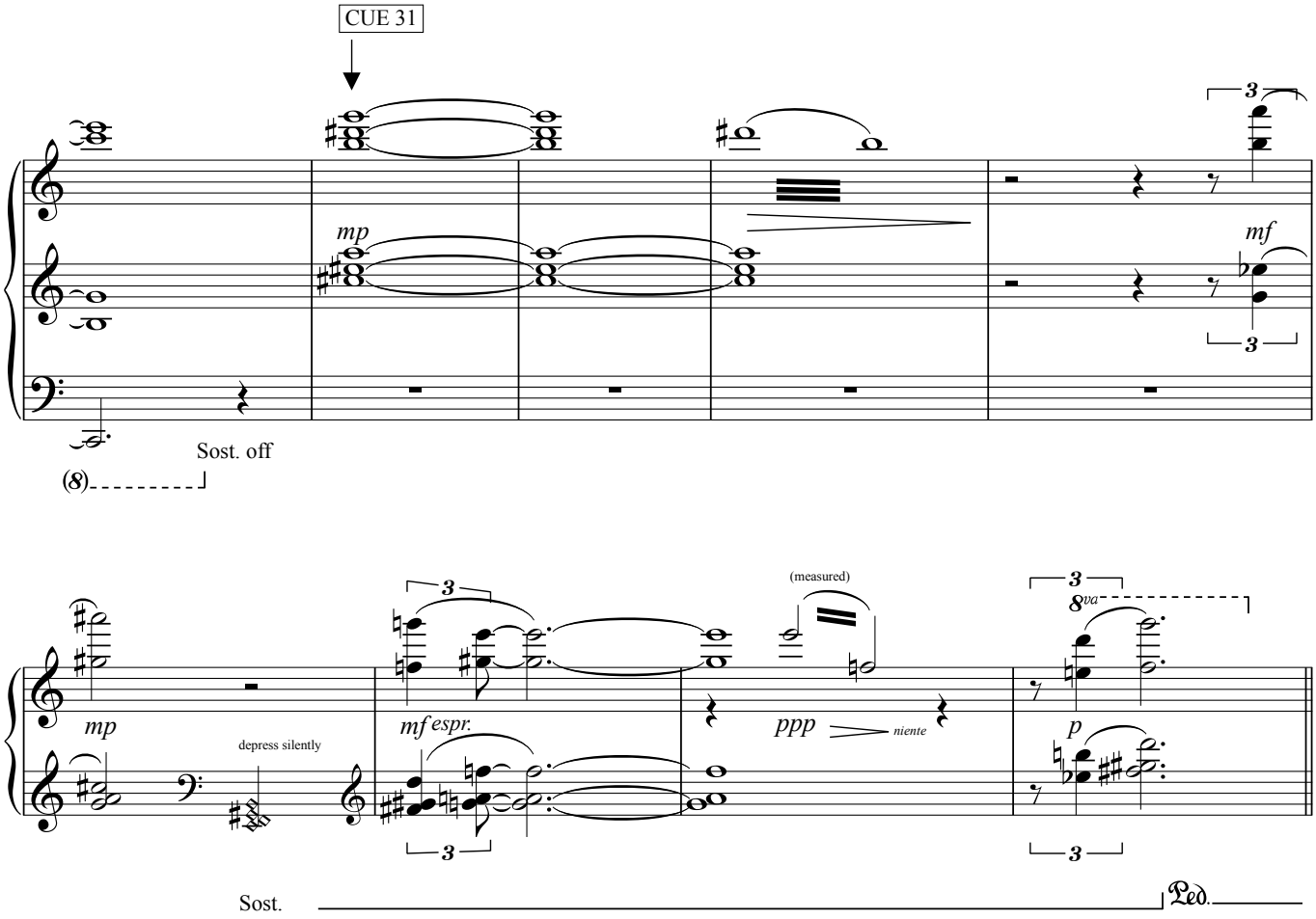

CUE 20
♩ = 60
mf
p
pp
pp
3
CUE 21
CUE 22
CUE 23
8va
ff
f
p
sf
8vb
Ped.
1/2 Ped.
(partly damp low resonance)
mp
mf
pp
pp espr.
3
cresc.
mf
pp
tr
segue

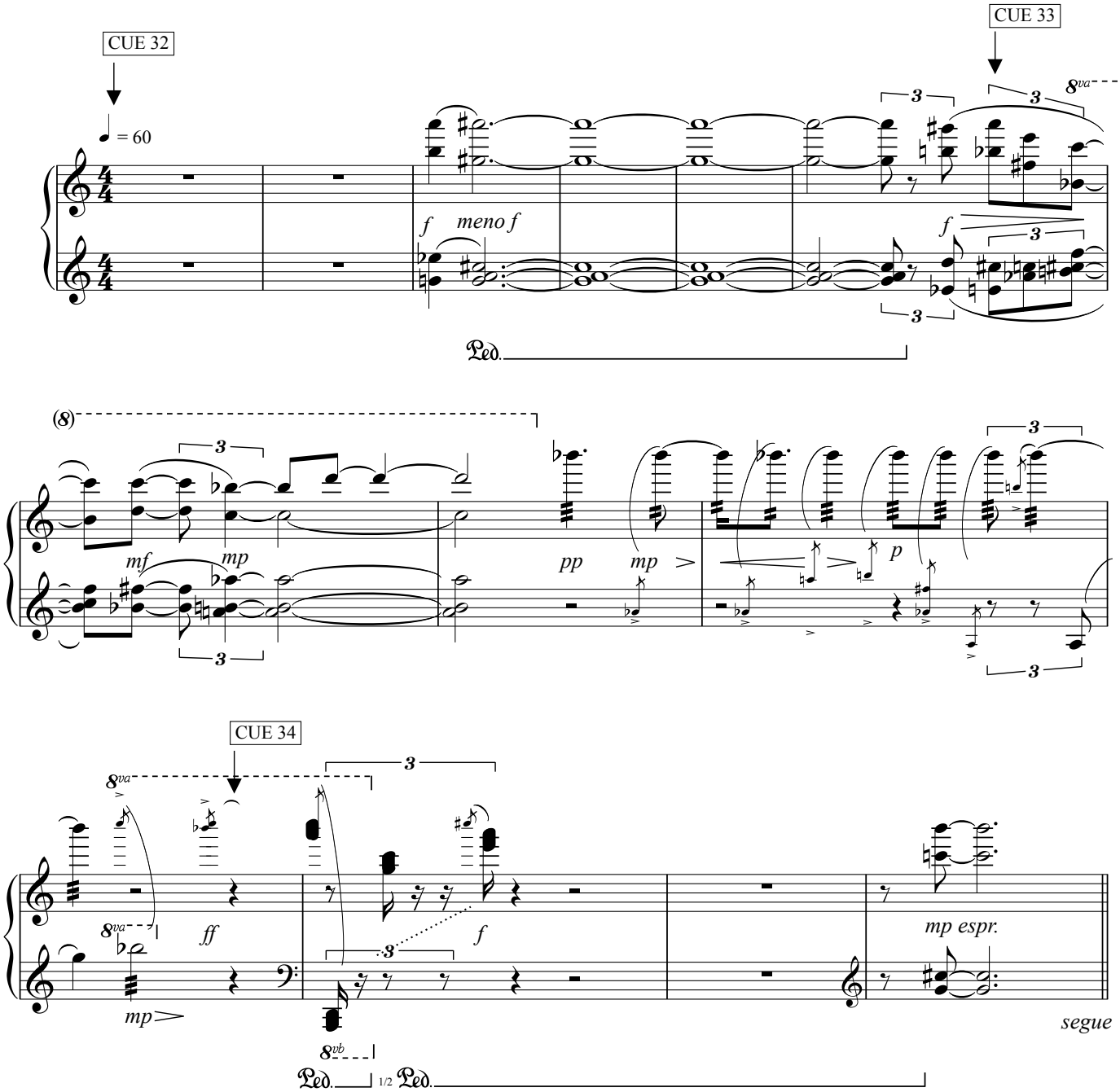

CUE 24
= 80
8va
(both hands)
pppp
ppp
ppp
mf
pp
ppp
mf
8va
3
pp
mp
ppp
niente
CUE 25
3
3
p
dim.
mp
8va
pp
ppp
3
3
CUE 26
(8)
8va
3
mf
f
mf
8va
3
8va
3
ppp
p
3
ppp
sost.

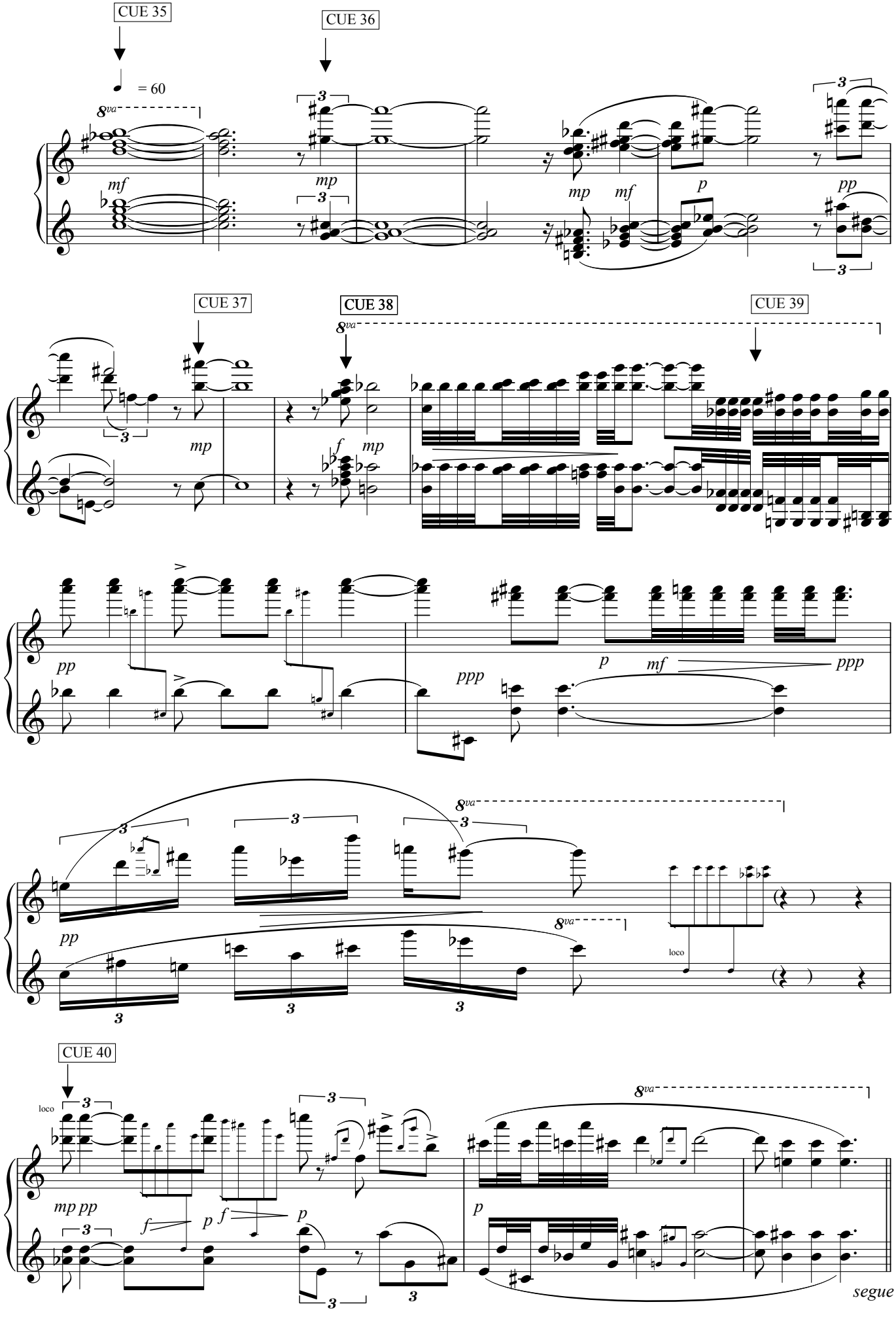


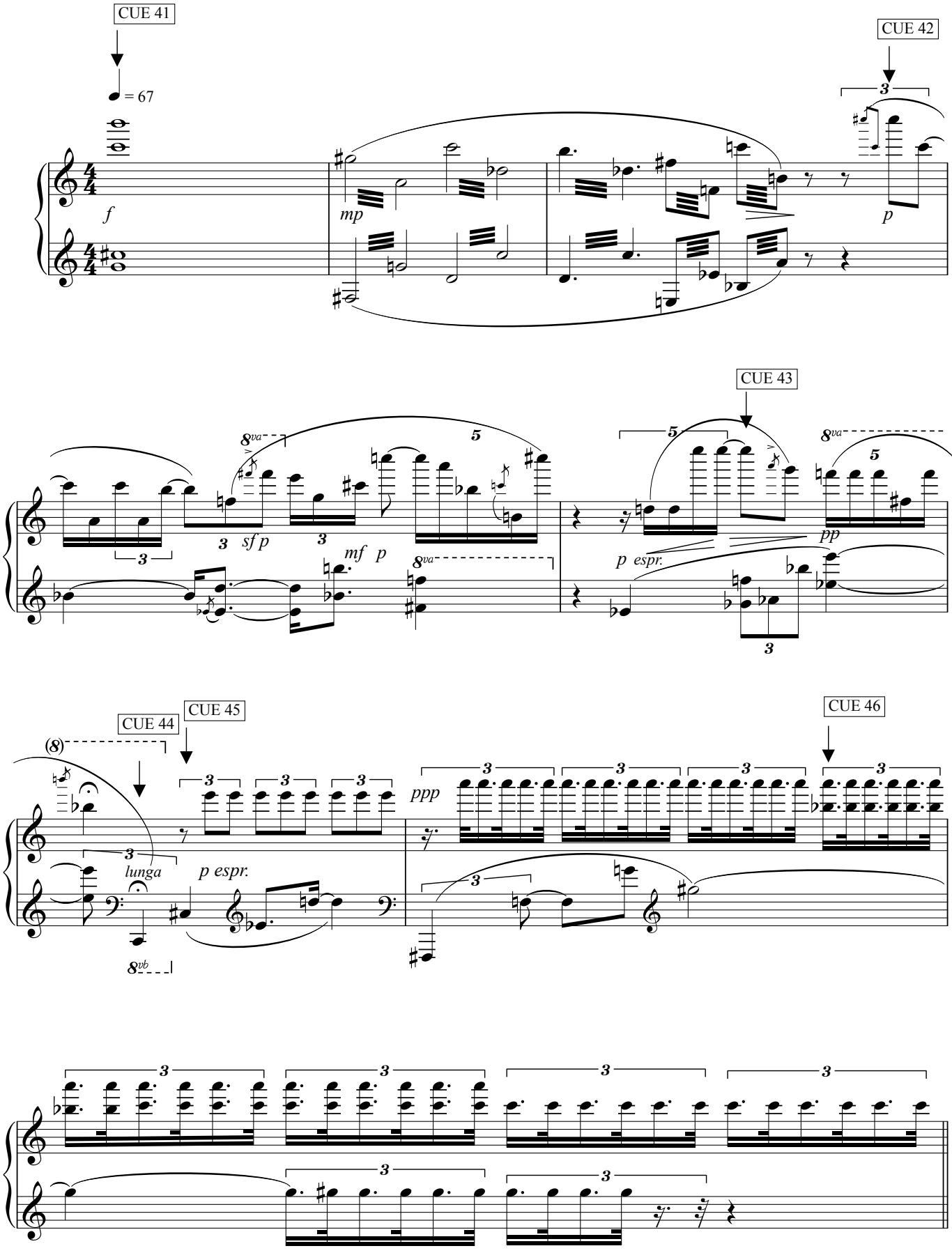
* narrow (min. 3rd) cluster

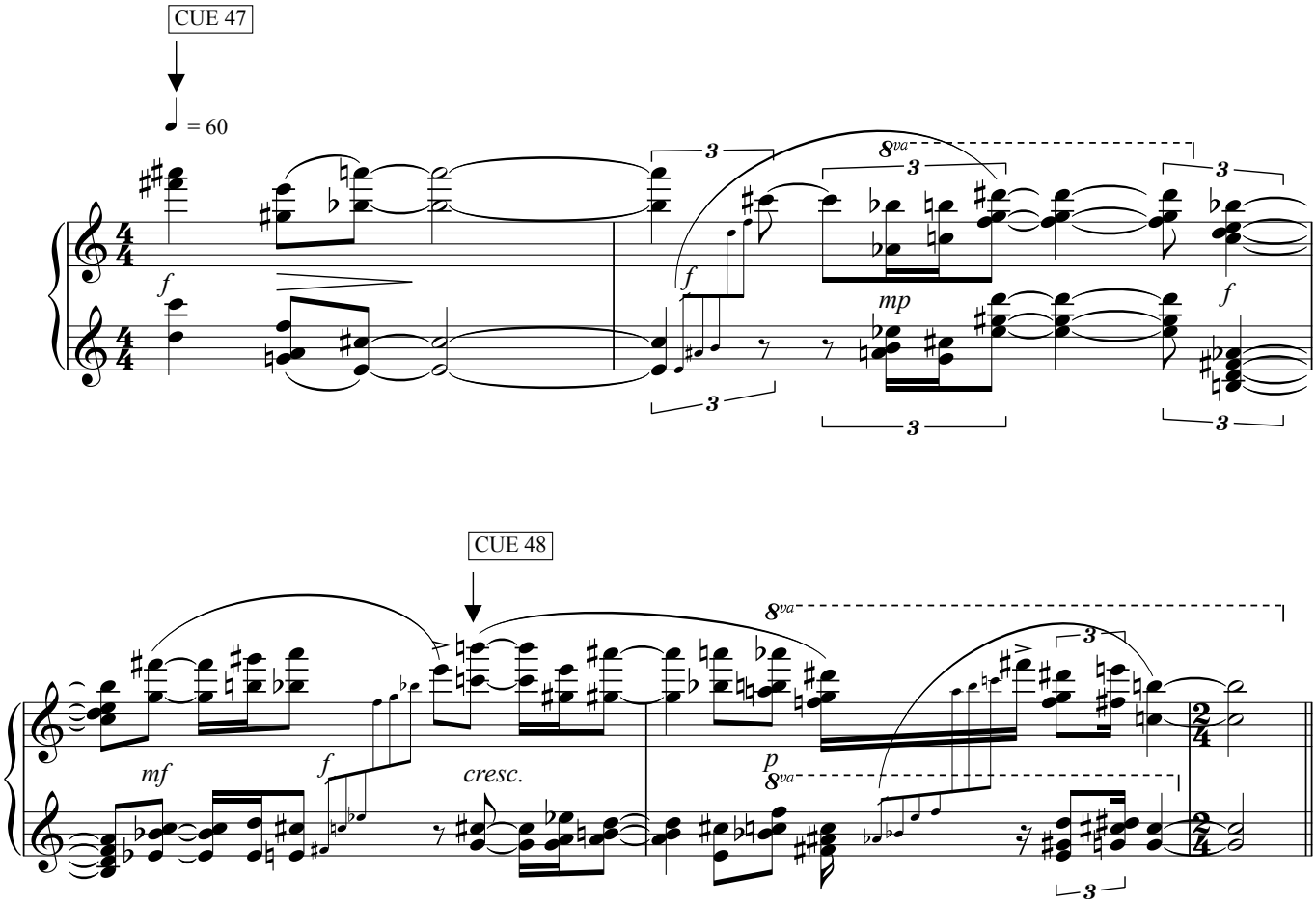

CUE 29
♩ = 60
ff
< ppp >
dal niente
pppp
ppp
8vb
con Ped.
Sost.
EA
CUE 30
8va
pp
p
ppp
3
pp
mf
sec.
7
(8)
Sost. (sempre)

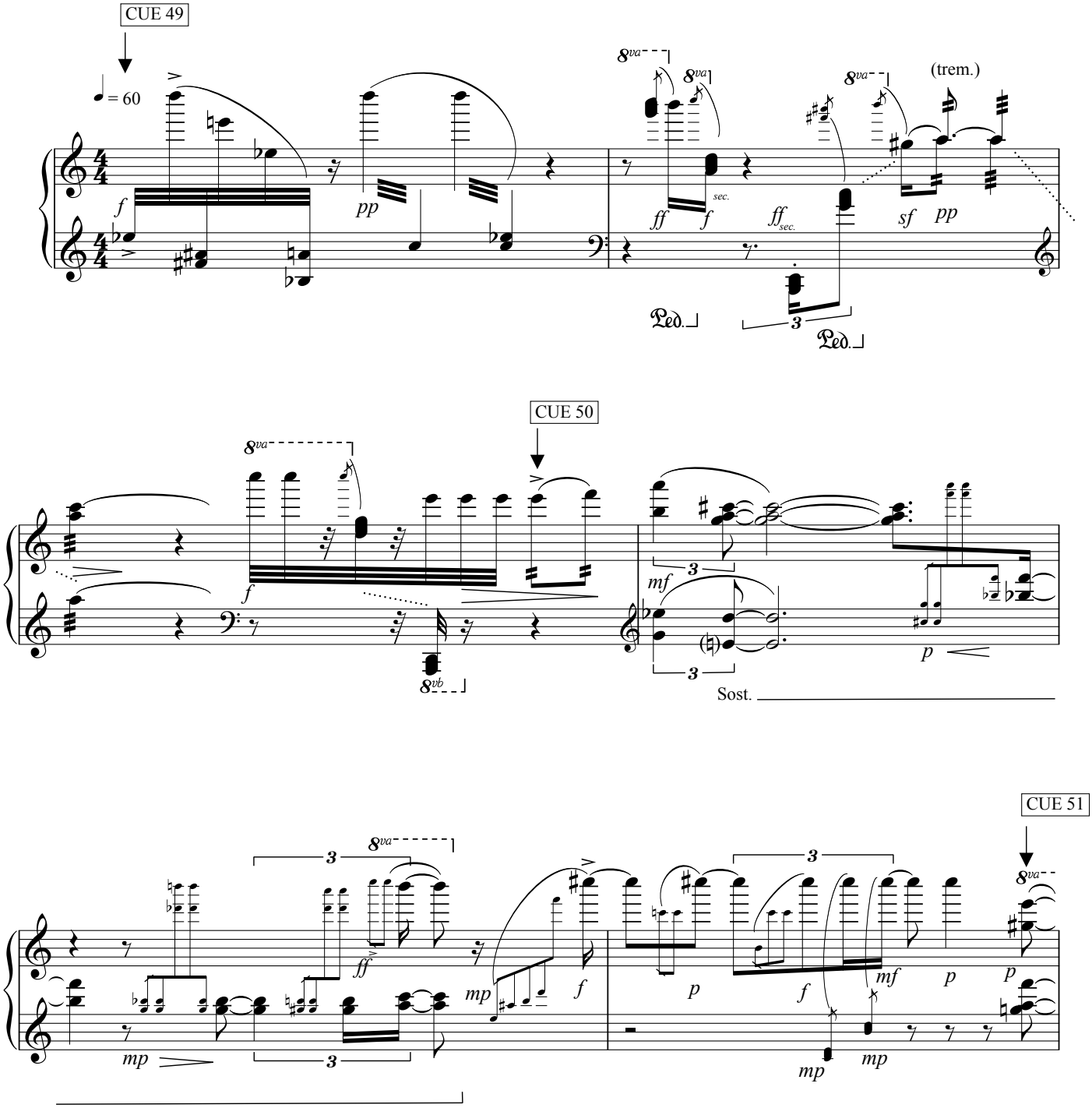

CUE 31
mp
mf
3
Sost. off
(8)
(measured)
8va
mp
depress silently
mf espr.
ppp
niente
p
Sost.
Ped.

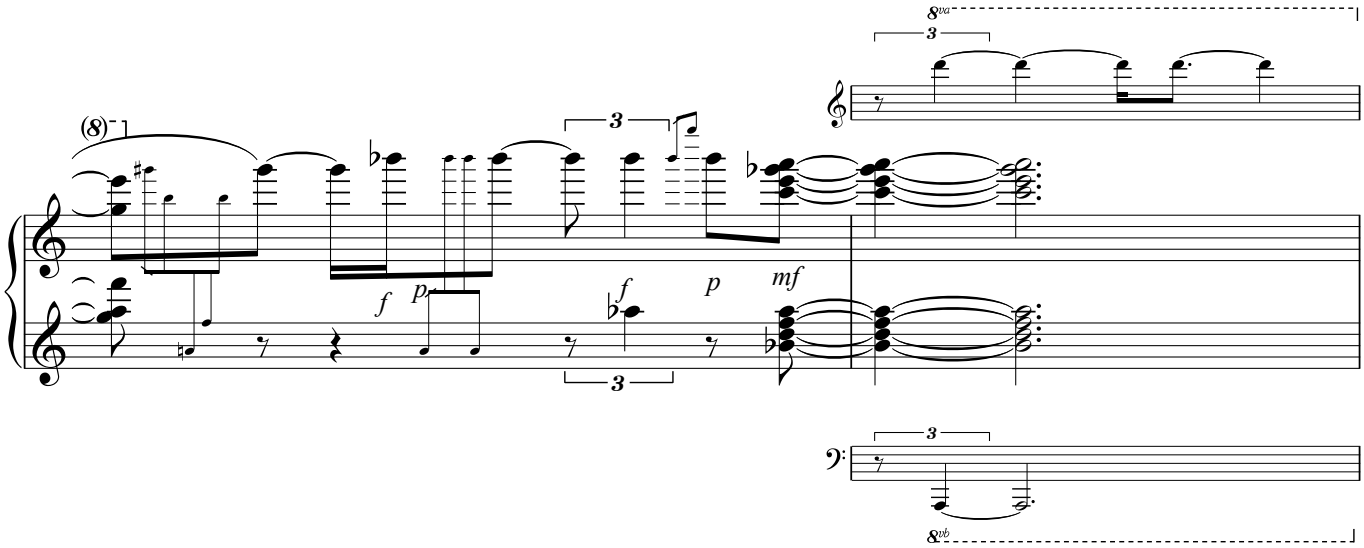

CUE 32
CUE 33
CUE 34
♩ = 60
f
meno f
f
mf
mp
pp
mp
p
ff
f
mp
mp espr.
segue
Ped.
1/2 Ped.

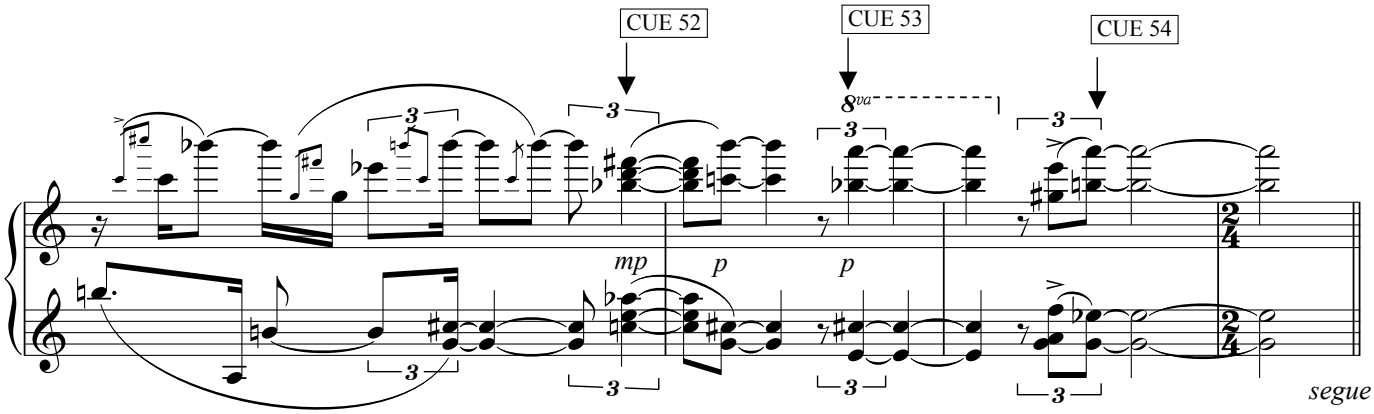

CUE 35
CUE 36
= 60
8va
mf
mp
mp
mf
p
pp
CUE 37
CUE 38
CUE 39
mp
f
mp
pp
ppp
p
mf
ppp
pp
loco
CUE 40
loco
mp pp
f
p
f
p
p
segue

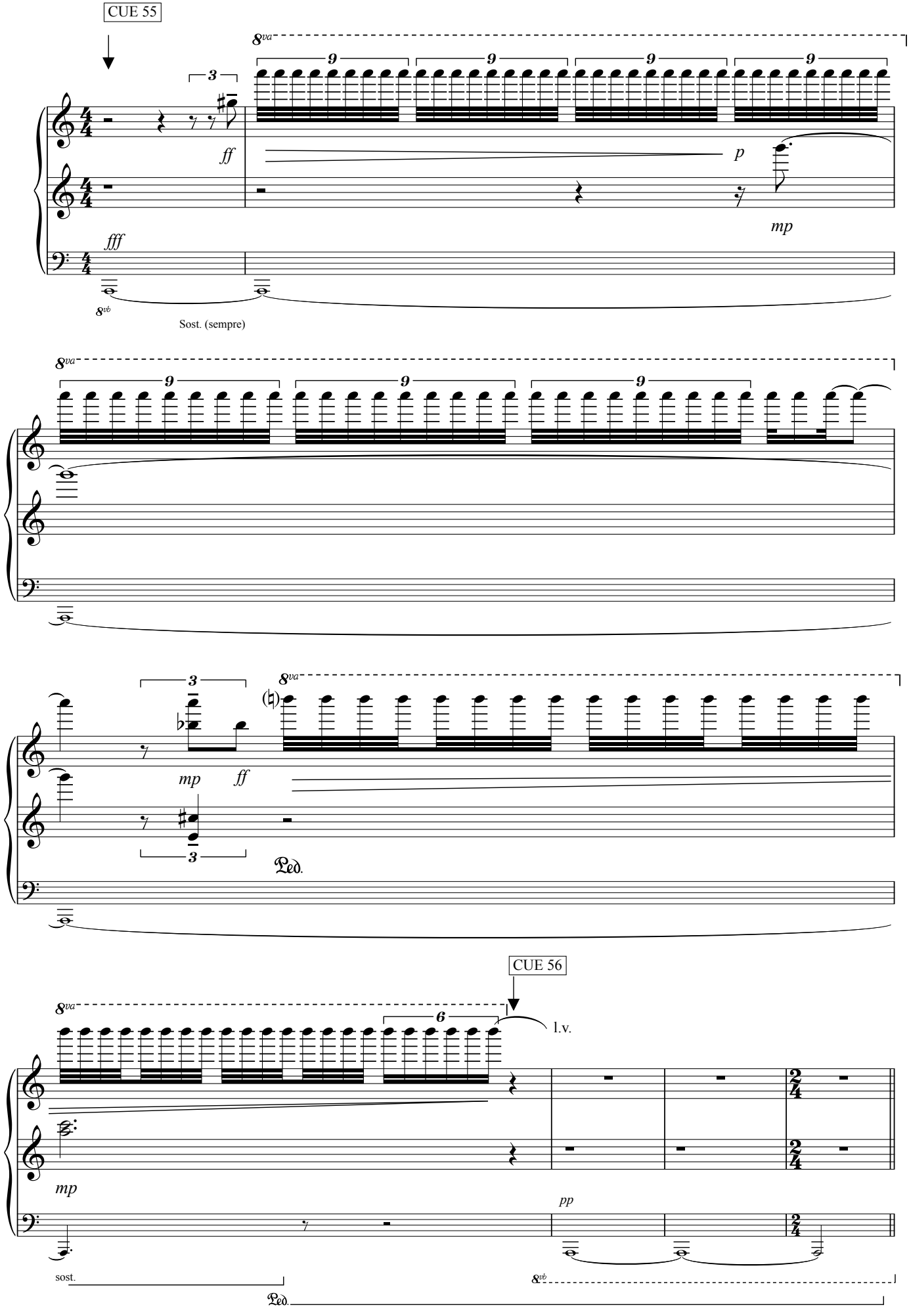

CUE 41
CUE 42
CUE 43
CUE 44
CUE 45
CUE 46
♩ = 67
f
mp
p
sf p
mf p
p espr.
pp
ppp
lunga
8va
8vb

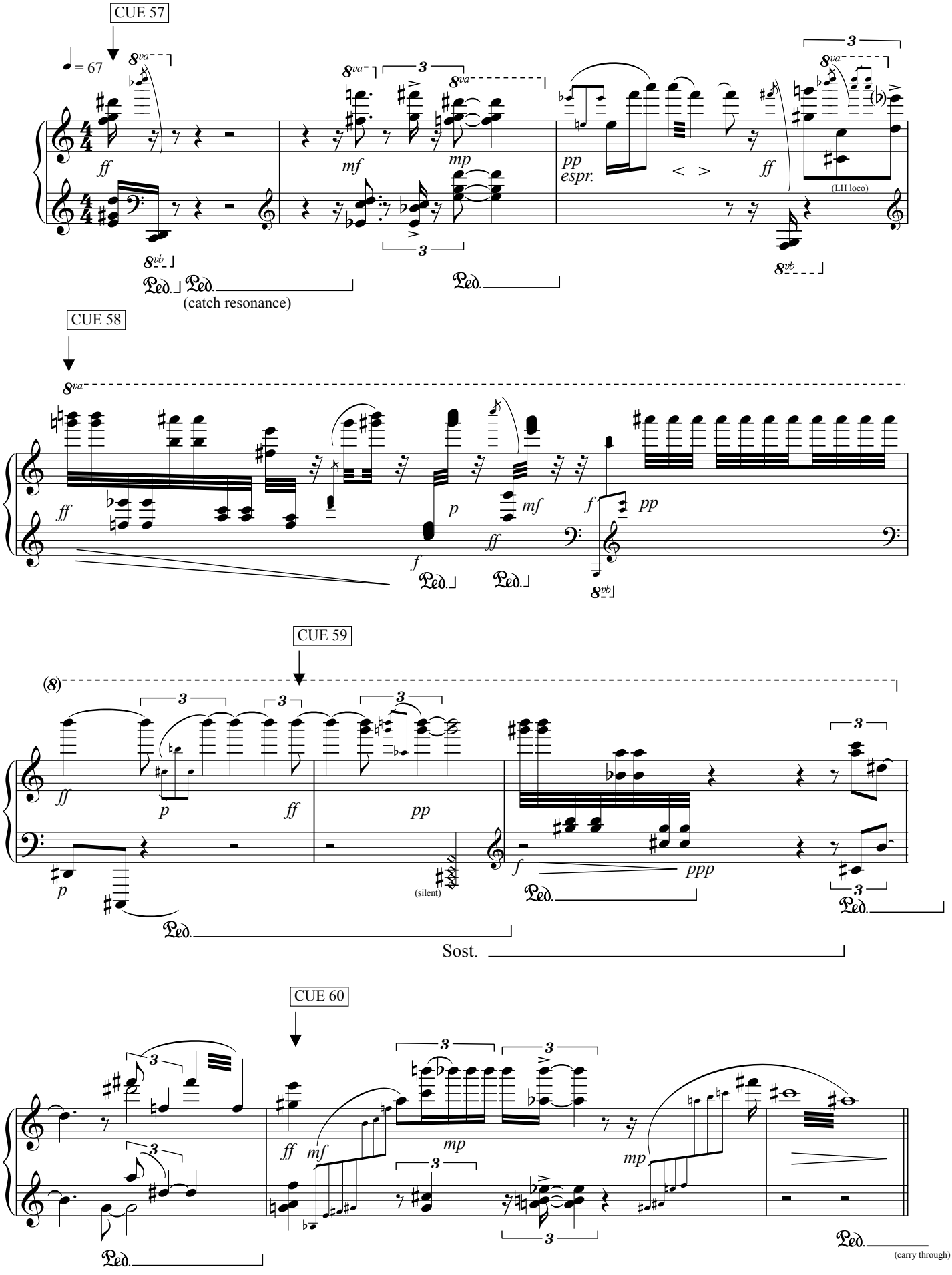

CUE 47
= 60
f
f
mp
f
CUE 48
mf
f
cresc.
p

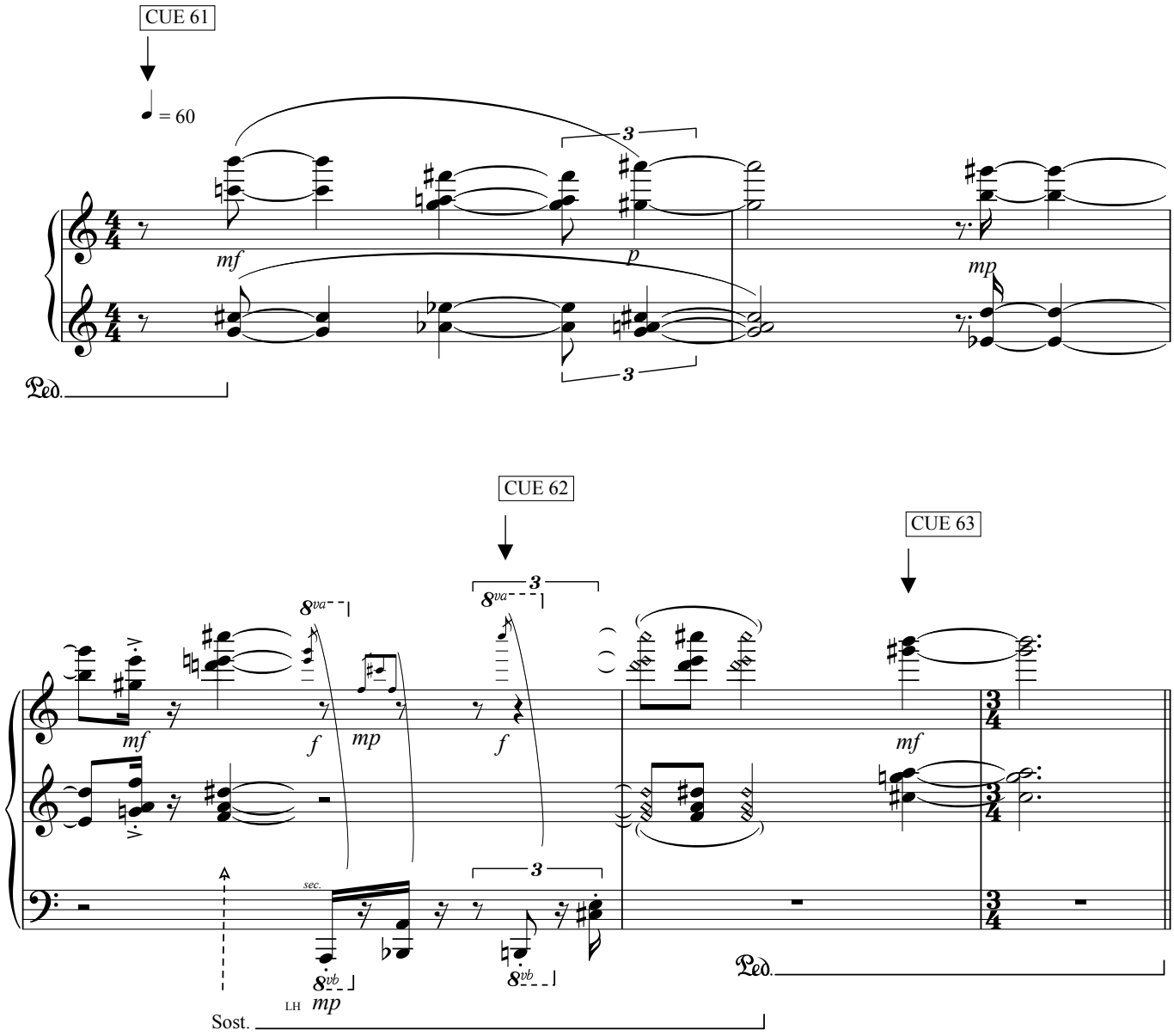

CUE 49
♩ = 60
(trem.)
CUE 50
Sost.
CUE 51

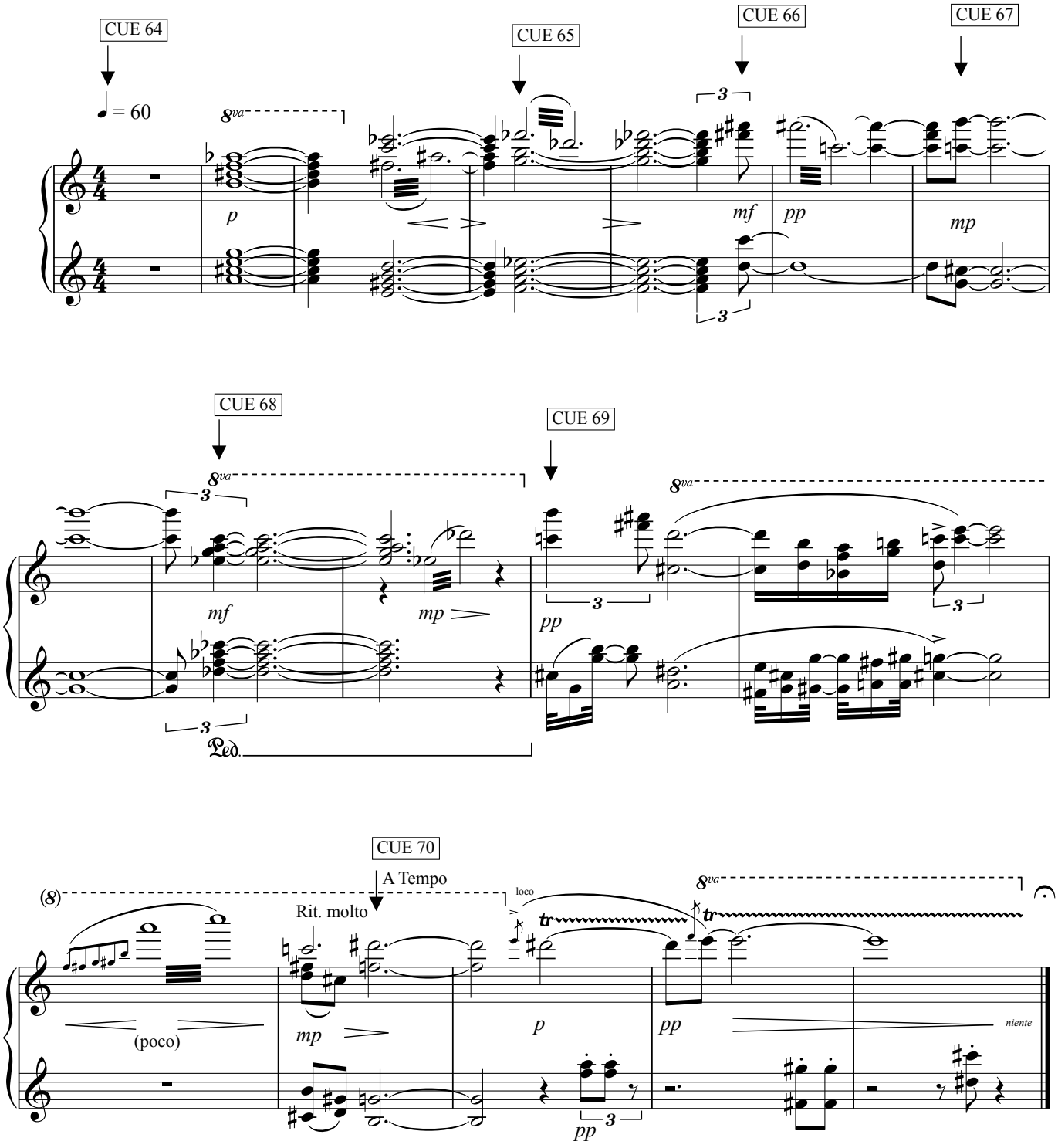

8va
3
(8)
3
f
p
f
p
mf
3
3
8vb


CUE 52
CUE 53
CUE 54
8va
3
mp
p
p
2/4
segue


CUE 55
8va
9
3
ff
p
mp
fff
8vb
Sost. (sempre)
8va
9
8va
3
mp
ff
3
Ped.
CUE 56
8va
6
l.v.
mp
pp
sost.
8vb
Ped.


CUE 57
♩ = 67
8va
8vb
ff
mf
mp
pp
espr.
ff
(LH loco)
Ped.
(catch resonance)
CUE 58
8va
ff
p
mf
f
pp
f
ff
8vb
CUE 59
(8)
ff
p
ff
pp
(silent)
f
ppp
Ped.
Sost.
CUE 60
ff
mf
mp
mp
Ped.
(carry through)


CUE 61
♩ = 60
mf
p
mp
Ped.
CUE 62
CUE 63
8va
f
mp
f
mf
sec.
8vb
LH
mp
Sost.
Ped.


CUE 64
CUE 65
CUE 66
CUE 67
CUE 68
CUE 69
CUE 70
♩ = 60
8va
p
mf
pp
mp
Ped.
A Tempo
Rit. molto
(poco)
loco
tr
niente